

Westfield

Local Heroes

2020

Westfield Local Heroes is a recognition and awards program that discovers and celebrates people across Australia and New Zealand who make a positive impact to their local community and environment.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities and a public vote determines the successful 2020 nominees for every Westfield centre.

The successful heroes are each awarded \$10,000 for their affiliated organisations.

Westfield
Local Heroes

Since the program began, we have awarded \$3.62 million to 363 community organisations.

Every year, we recognise more than 120 Westfield Local Heroes and provide more than \$1.2M in community grants to their affiliated organisations.

We congratulate all the 2020 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make.

westfield.com.au/local-heroes

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Bondi Junction

NSW

Sophie Smith responded to the grief of losing her prematurely born triplets by founding a running group that has raised more than \$3.5 million lifesaving neonatal equipment and research.

In 2016, Sophie and her late husband, Ash, became parents to triplets, Jasper, Henry and Evan. Tragically, despite huge efforts to save their lives at the Royal Hospital for Women, they did not survive.

After their babies passed away Sophie & Ash were heartbroken but determined that something good could come from their sons' short lives.

They decided to run a half marathon to raise \$20,000 for one new humidicrib for the hospital. Six months later, their team of 98 ran the SMH Marathon, raising \$80,000, and Sophie decided she wanted to continue to run and fundraise, to give premature babies a better chance of survival.

"Channelling my grief in this way gave me a renewed sense of purpose," says Sophie.

Two years after losing their triplets, when their fourth son, Owen, was six months, Ash was diagnosed with incurable brain cancer. He was only 35.

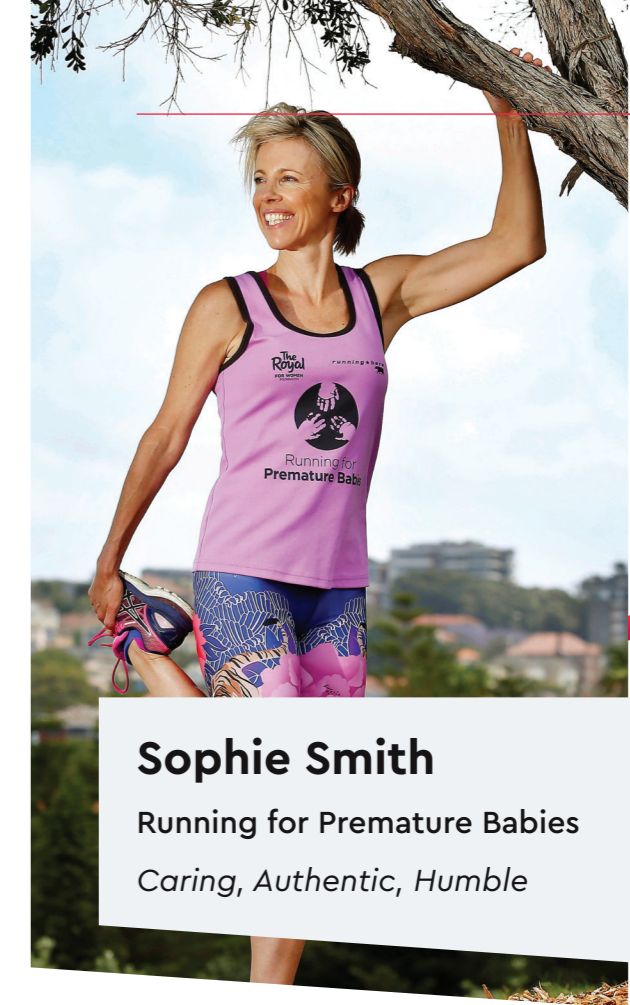
"Focusing on something bigger than our own personal challenges helped us through," Sophie says. Sadly Ash passed away in 2016. Since then Sophie has grown the charity to support hospitals around the country.

So far, her charity has helped approximately 6000 babies, funding critical research and providing 56 pieces of donated equipment.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Running for Premature Babies will use its grant to grow their running communities and increase funding for lifesaving equipment to give premature babies a better chance of survival.

Sophie's Nominator says "Sophie Smith is a hero because she has overcome true hardship to inspire and save thousands of families and their babies."



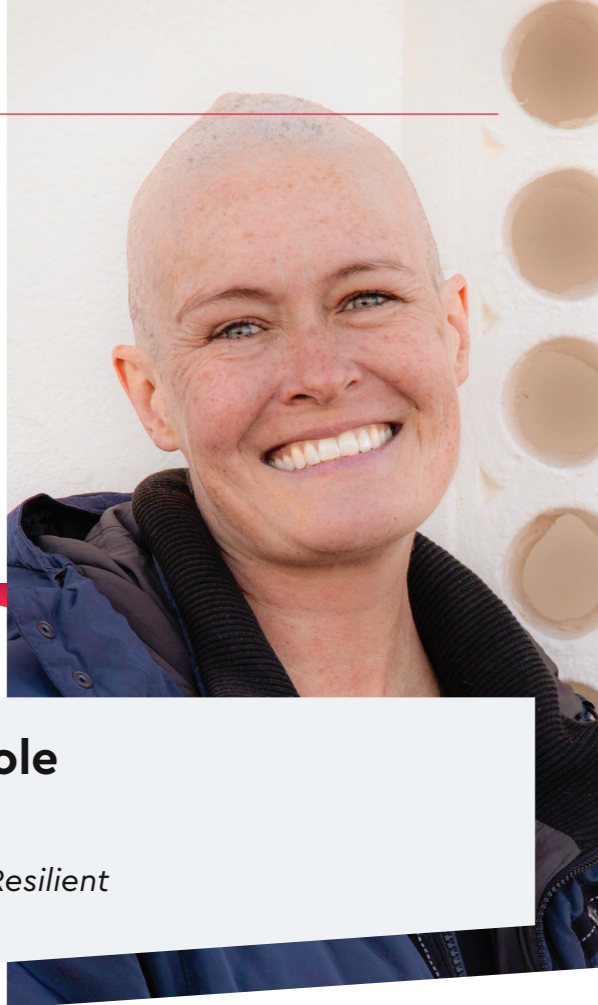
Sophie Smith

Running for Premature Babies

Caring, Authentic, Humble

Running for life

"Channelling my grief in this way gave me a renewed sense of purpose," says Sophie.



Siobhan O'Toole

St Vincent's Hospital

Motivated, Selfless, Resilient

Champion for Exercise Rehabilitation for Cancer Patients

"I am undoubtedly whole again because I had the support and access to free exercise during my treatment."

Siobhan O'Toole is a committed fundraiser and has organised numerous community events to help cancer patients ward off a recurrence of the disease.

Siobhan O'Toole is a committed fundraiser and has organised numerous community events to help cancer patients ward off a recurrence of the disease.

Cancer survivor, Siobhan is passionate about giving other patients access to the same exercise regime that helped her get through gruelling treatments and boosted her odds of staying cancer-free.

In a short time, she has raised more than \$60,000 for the pilot Cancer Exercise Prehab program at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney.

Each \$25,000 will allow 20 more patients to have physical training integrated into their treatment plans.

"Thanks to exercise, I have 40 to 50 per cent less chance of getting a recurrence," says Siobhan, who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer in 2018.

"I am undoubtedly whole again because I had the support and access to free exercise during my treatment."

During her chemotherapy treatment, Siobhan walked an average 8900 steps a day and lifted weights three times a week.

Exercise improved her mental health and sleep, provided welcome relief from fatigue and restored her muscle mass.

"Traditionally cancer patients are wrapped in cotton wool and as a result their condition deteriorates," says Siobhan.

"However, there is mounting scientific evidence that exercise can help patients endure treatments."

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

St Vincent's Hospital will use the grant to develop an online exercise program so cancer patients can work out at home.

Siobhan's nominator says: "Siobhan will stop at nothing to ensure free exercise, nutrition and mental health support is available for all patients fighting cancer."

Our Big Kitchen (OBK) with its familiar red, green and orange logo is one of those feel-good organisations that add soul to a suburb.

The big heart behind the industrial-sized Bondi kitchen is Laya Slavin, who co-founded it with her husband, Rabbi Dr Dovid Slavin.

Supported by volunteers from every walk of life, they have turned their wish to do good into a tangible reality that is far bigger than the 70,000 nutritious meals they provide a year.

Mother of eight Laya exudes positive energy and radiates compassion, warmth and non-judgmental acceptance, bringing magic into her volunteer work.

On most days, Laya is either in the kitchen cooking with people of all abilities, delivering food to people in need, visiting someone in hospital dressed up in a costume or being a shoulder to cry on.

Laya has also started a wig library for women who have lost their hair from illness.

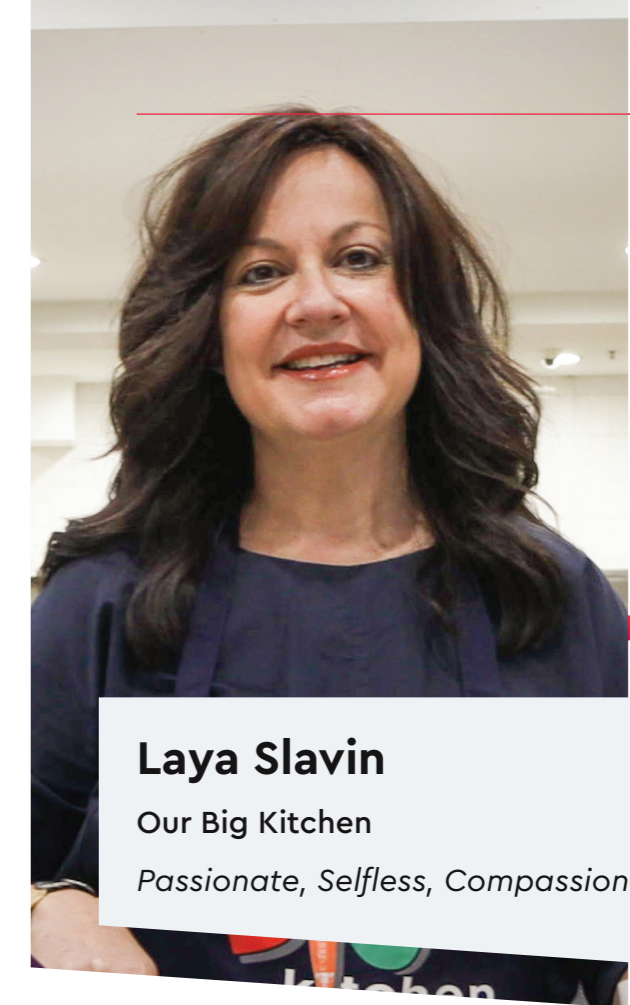
During the recent bushfires, Laya brought together volunteers from a melting pot of suburbs across Sydney to create thousands of personalised biscuits and handwritten messages of thanks, love and compassion for victims and firefighters.

Volunteers poured into the kitchen to help in any way they could. Firefighters also came to express their appreciation.

Westfield Local Heroes are nominated and voted for by their communities, with the three top finalists per Westfield centre each awarded a \$10,000 grant for their affiliated organisation.

Our Big Kitchen will use its grant to buy kitchen equipment and to contribute to delivery costs.

Laya's nominator says: "Laya is a shining example of leadership, love and compassion. She is full of life and spends her energy on helping others. Laya empowers countless individuals to be givers in their own lives."



Laya Slavin

Our Big Kitchen

Passionate, Selfless, Compassionate

Showing love with food

"On most days, Laya is either in the kitchen cooking with people of all abilities, delivering food to people in need, visiting someone in hospital dressed up in a costume or being a shoulder to cry on."

Your 2020 Finalists

Sylvia Hall

Holdsworth Community

Sylvia Hall has lived in the same Eastern Suburbs house for 72 years and has been helping to feed frail, ill or socially isolated people in the community for more than 40 years.

She became involved when a neighbour needed help packing meals for Woollahra Meals on Wheels. In 2013, Woollahra Meals on Wheels became part of Holdsworth Home Cuisine, and Sylvia continued helping her clients five days a week.

"I know they enjoy the company and the conversation, and the meals and support help them stay out of the nursing home for as long as possible," says Sylvia.

Carole Schlessinger

Kids Giving Back

Carole Schlessinger gave up a lucrative business to launch Kids Giving Back, a charity providing children with unique opportunities to experience the joy of giving.

So far, more than 27,500 children and family members have volunteered, making and distributing over 100,000 meals through Kids Giving Back which she created with co-founder Ruth Tofler-Riesel.

"Our unique and fun programs enable children through hands-on, practical and meaningful activities to support the work of charities, to develop empathy and to experience altruism and a sense of belonging," Carole says. The programs encourage the children to think about "we", and not just "me".

Danny Hui

Sameview

Danny Hui developed Sameview to help his family coordinate the 37 people involved in the care of his youngest son, Monty, who has a neurological condition that severely affects his movement.

"It's an online platform that gets everyone from a family's team on the same page, talking to each other, working with each other so that the family's goals can be achieved," Danny says.

He started working on the project fulltime four years ago. Since then, Sameview has won several awards. Following a surge during COVID-19 they now have more than 1000 users, and Danny is delighted that half of them are clinicians.

Recognising all of our 2020 nominees

Nadine Taylor

Hope + Heal

Sylvia Hall

Holdsworth Community

Laya Slavin

Our Big Kitchen

Sophie Smith

Running For Premature Babies

Siobhan O'Toole

St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney

Carole Schlessinger

Kids Giving Back

Danny Hui

Sameview

Will Hawes

Will2Live

Susan Marden

OneOnOne Children's Therapy

Jack Ellis

Goodfellas

Donna Mckiernan

Irish Support Agency NSW Inc

Victoria Rich

Bondi Girls Surf Riders

Lena Le Rolland

Bondi Surf Club

Michelle Lee

Raise Foundation

Carolina Gottardo

Jesuit Refugee Service Australia

Sophie Levy

NSW Friendship Circle

Narelle Moore

Bondi Surf Bathers Life Saving Club

Anita Kolni

Ocean Lovers Festival

Jane Cosgrave

Friends Of Wairoa School Inc

Tanya Duckworth

Endometriosis Australia

Lisa Rubinstein

Arnie's Recon

Joel Pilgrim

Waves Of Wellness Foundation

Tara Hurster

The Tara Clinic

Alan David Joffe

Shalom Gamarada Foundation

Rabbi Mendel Kastel Oam

Jewish House

Charlotte Evans

Splash Without The Trash / Clean Up Australia

Lynette Anderson

Lifeline North Coast (NSW)

If you or anyone you know would like more information on what support is available:

AUSTRALIA

Lifeline: 13 11 14
Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
MensLine: 1300 78 99 78
Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

NEW ZEALAND

Lifeline: 0800 543 354
Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865
Kidslines: 0800 54 37 54
Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757
Samaritans: 0800 726 666
Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450

westfield.com.au/local-heroes

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

Westfield

Local Heroes

2020